

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10568 01 OF 03 261435Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4990
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 NEW DELHI 10568

LIMDIS

PARIS-ATTENTION SCIENCE COUNSELOR FOR NYE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, IN
SUBJECT: STRATEGY FOR NYE VISIT

REF: STATE 172366

1. WE GENERALLY SUBSCRIBE TO THE STRATEGY FOR THE NYE VISIT HERE JULY 31- AUGUST 4 AND, LIKE THE DEPARTMENT, BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO CARRY FORWARD THE EXPLANATION OF US NUCLEAR POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDO-US NUCLEAR COOPERATION BEGUN EARLIER. WE HAVE OUTLINED THIS GENERAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA, WHO HAS CONCURRED WITH IT.

2. WE HAVE SEVERAL SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE APPROACH IN THE REFTEL. RE. PARA 3 (A), THE GENERAL EXPLANATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S NUCLEAR POLICY SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT IT IS BASED ON A MORAL CONCERN
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 10568 01 OF 03 261435Z

FOR THE SAFETY OF HUMANITY; THAT ITS SCOPE IS GLOBAL AND IN NO WAY DISCRIMINATORY TOWARD INDIA OR THE DEVELOPING WORLD; AND THAT THIS IS CLEAR IN THE SACRIFICES BEING ASKED OF THE U.S. ITSELF AS WELL AS OF VARIOUS OF OUR PRINCIPAL ALLIES. THE PRESENTATION SHOULD EMPHASIZE ALSO OUR RECOGNITION OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN BOTH

INDIA'S NEEDS AND PLANNING. DEPUTY SECRETARY
CHRISTOPHER LAID A FINE BASIS ALONG THESE LINES
FOR NYE'S TALKS, BUT THE THEMES CAN STAND REITERATION.
AT THE SAME TIME WELL KNOWN TO THE INDIANS AND HENCE
UNAVOIDABLE IS THE LACK OF ENTIRE SUPPORT FOR THESE POLICIES IN BOTH
THE U.S. CONGRESS AND AMONG SOME OF OUR ALLIES.

3. RE PARA 3 (D), WE AGREE THAT THE COMPREHENSIVE SAFEGUARDS
ISSUE IS THE BIG HURDLE. FROM VELLODI
AND THE FRENCH WE HAVE SOME INDICATION THAT THE GOI MAY
BE INDUCED, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT RESISTANCE, TO
ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON ALL SIGNIFICANT
IMPORTANT MATERIEL; THIS OF COURSE IS RELEVANT
TO THE RAPP I AND II QUESTION. THE SAME SOURCES
AND ALMOST ALL OTHER INDICATORS, HOWEVER, POINT AGAINST
THE GOI' ACCEPTING SAFEGUARDS ON ITS INDIGENOUS NUCLEAR
DEVELOPMENTS. TECHNICALLY, THE PRIME MINISTER MAY HAVE LEFT
THAT DOOR JUST A LITTLE OPEN WHEN HE REPLIED IN PARLIAMENT ON
JULY 13 THAT HE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO ANY INSPECTION BY ANYBODY
UNTIL THEY ALLOW HIM TO INSPECT THEIR PLANTS. IT CAN BE
ARGUED THAT OUR WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE IAEA SAFEGUARDS ON OUR
CIVILIAN NUCLEAR PLANTS MEETS THIS CONDITION, BUT WE WOULD
CAUTION AGAINST PUTTING MUCH STOCK IN THAT THEORETICAL LOOPHOLE.
AS WE SPELL OUT IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THIS MESSAGE, WE HAVE
TO CONCLUDE THAT IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE ANY INDIAN GOVT WOULD HAVE
A HARD TIME SELLING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS TO THE PARLIAMENT,
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 10568 01 OF 03 261435Z

EVEN IF IT COULD CONVINCE ITSELF THAT FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS
WERE ACCEPTABLE.

4. RE PARA 3 (F), WE URGE THAT NYE EXPRESS CONFIDENCE
IN THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER DESAI AS
REGARDS NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS AND NOT REPEAT NOT
AGAIN MAKE A POINT OF WHAT ANOTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WOULD DO
TO TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY.

5. RE PARA 4, WE UNDERSTAND THAT INDIANS FEEL THAT US
HAS NOT BEEN ENTIRELY WHOLEHEARTED TO DATE ABOUT COOPERATION
UNDER ARTICLE III, A, 1-4 OF THE IAEA STATUTE. HENCE THE
ENTICEMENT OF A NEW OFFER OF GREATER COOPERATION FROM US MAY
NOT CARRY MUCH WEIGHT. AT THE SAME TIME SETHNA CLEARLY VALUES
CONTACT WITH WESTERN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
AND COULD NOT FIND PLEASING ANY MAJOR CURTAILMENT OF THESE
RELATIONSHIPS.

6. RE PARA 5, WE THINK THE IMPORTANCE THE USG ATTACHES
TO SECURING SAFEGUARDS ON THE IMPORTED HEAVY WATER IN RAPP I AND
CIRUS REACTORS SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR IN DELHI AS WELL AS BOMBAY
IN VIEW OF SETHNA'S DISAGREEMENT WITH THE IAEA AS TO THE

SCOPE OF SAFEGUARDS PERTINENT TO RUSSIAN HEAVY WATER
FOR RAPP II. IF THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINUATION OF
SAFEGUARDS AT TARAPUR IN EVENT OF US NEED TO TERMINATE SUPPLY IS
TO BE RAISED, WE THINK THIS TOO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN DELHI
TALKS WITH MEHTA, VELLODI AND SHANKAR. WE SUGGEST THAT IT
BE TREATED AS A MATTER OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING, RAISED BECAUSE
OF OUR HOPE THAT THE MUTUAL RESPECT, TRUST, AND GOODWILL
WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE USG AND GOI CAN BE PROTECTED AND MADE TO
PREVAIL SHOULD THE TWO COUNTRIES FINALLY HAVE TO AGREE TO DISAGREE
ON CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF NUCLEAR POLICY.

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10568 02 OF 03 261428Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 NEW DELHI 10568

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M ADDITIONALLY, MEHTA HAS ASKED THAT NYE DISCUSS
THE BROAD PATTERN OF US NONPROLIFERATION EFFORTS AS
THESE AFFECT INDIA AND THERS. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR
INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN AND PAKISTAN. HE
ALSO SAID HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN GETTING AN UPDATE
ON WHERE THE NPT STANDS.

8. WE ARE WORKING OUT PROGRAMMING DETAILS WITH MEA.
WE ANTICIPATE THAT INDIAN PARTICIPANTS IN NEW DELHI
ROUND WILL BE MEHTA, V. SHANKAR (PM'S PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY), AND M.A. VELLODI (SECRETARY IN MEA).
IT HAD BEEN OUR EARLIER IMPRESSION FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS
WITH SHANKAR THAT HOMI SETHNA WOULD NOT COME TO
DELHI BUT WOULD LEAD INDIAN GROUP IN BOMBAY AND
ACCOMPANY NYE PARTY TO TARAPUR. IN OUR DISCUSSION

YESTERDAY WITH MEHTA, HOWEVER, HE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF SETHNA ALSO JOINING THE DELHI TALKS. WE SHOULD HAVE MORE DEFINITE WORD ON THIS SHORTLY. SHOULD SETHNA COME HERE, WE WOULD HAVE TO REVISE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 10568 02 OF 03 261428Z

SOMEWHAT THE APPROACH TO THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED US COOPERATION WITH INDIA MENTIONED IN REFTEL, PARA 4, TO INCLUDE SOMEWHAT GREATER REFERENCE TO THIS IN DELHI THAN WE HAD PLANNED TO GIVE IT. WE INTEND TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE INDIANS, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PREFER THAT TECHNICAL MATTERS BE DISCUSSED PRIMARILY IN THE BOMBAY SESSION.

9. WE ANTICIPATE THAT WE WILL PROBABLY HAVE A LONG SESSION WITH THE INDIANS IN DELHI ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 1. WE WILL HAVE FURTHER DETAILS ON THIS IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. (BOMBAY/TARAPUR PROGRAM SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGE.) MEHTA HAS MENTIONED TO US THAT HE WILL BE GOING TO DACCA FOR THE FARAKKA BARRAGE TALKS JULY 28. HE EXPECTS TO RETURN BY JULY 31, BUT HAS ASKED THAT WE REMAIN FLEXIBLE ON SCHEDULING MORNING OF AUGUST 1. FOR THE SAME REASON, HE PREFERS A DINNER ON AUGUST 1 HOSTED BY THE GOI TO A WORKING LUNCH THAT DAY. HE HAS RESPONDED VERY FAVORABLY TO IDEA, WHICH WE SUPPORT, OF NYE PARTY MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER AND IS SEEKING TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT. (FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE WILL BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHEN THE NYE PARTY IS HERE.)

10. AMBASSADOR AND POL COUNSELOR SCHAFER PLAN TO JOIN NYE GROUP FOR DELHI TALKS. SHOULD SETHNA PARTICIPATE WE INTEND TO HAVE BILL COURTNEY ALSO TAKE PART. WE INTEND IN ANY EVENT TO HAVE COURTNEY COME UP FOR A WORKING DINNER OF US PARTICIPANTS AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE (ROOSEVEVENT HOUSE) ON SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 31. ACTING DCM BELLOCCHI AND SCHAFER WILL ALSO PARTICIPATE. AMBASSADOR INVITES NYE, SIEVERING, AND VAN DOREN TO STAY AT RESIDENCE DURING
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 10568 02 OF 03 261428Z

THEIR NEW DELHI VISIT.

10. PRESS LINE: WE AGREE WITH SUGGESTED PRESS LINE SPELLED OUT IN PARA 8, REFTEL. WE HAVE MENTIONED THIS APPROACH TO MEHTA, WHO CONCURS IN IT.

11. WE HAVE ASKED BILL COURTNEY TO REPLY DIRECTLY TO REQUEST (REFTEL, PARA 9) FOR AN APPROPRIATE UPDATING OF ANALYSIS IN BOMBAY 1192. OUR COMMENTS ON OTHER ISSUES RAISED IN SAME PARA FOLLOW.

12. THE POLITICS OF NON-PROLIFERATION. PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND HIS STAND ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS BOTH APPEAR TO ENJOY THE ACQUIESCENCE IF NOT THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE BULK OF THE JANATA PARTY AT THIS TIME. THERE ARE DOUBTLESS IMPORTANT NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS CENTERING PRIMARILY ON THE FORMER JANA SANGH WHICH HAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE PM'S POSITION OR DISAGREE WITH IT. BUT WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO CHALLENGE THE PM'S STAND OR, WITH A FEW MINOR EXCEPTIONS, TO MAKE THEIR OPINIONS KNOWN. FOR MANY, PROBABLY MOST, WITHIN THE PARTY, POLICY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIONS IS A MATTER TO BE LEFT TO THE PM, AND THEY SEEM READY TO ACCEPT HIS LEAD AND TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON OTHER ISSUES MORE PERTINENT TO THEIR IMMEDIATE POLITICAL CONCERNS. SHOULD MORARJI DIE, OR WERE HIS AUTHORITY TO BE SERIOUSLY ERODED, POSITIONS WITHIN THE RULING PARTY ON BOTH NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIONS COULD WELL CHANGE. IT WOULD BE HAZARDOUS AT THIS TIME TO MAKE ANY FORECAST ABOUT THE CONFIGURATION OF ATTITUDES LIKELY TO EMERGE.

13. THE OPPOSITION, AND PARTICULARLY CONGRESS, SOUGHT IN THE LOK SABHA DEBATE ON NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY, TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THE PM'S STAND AGAINST FURTHER
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PAGE 04 NEW DE 10568 02 OF 03 261428Z

EXPLOSIONS, AND THEIR CRITICISM HAS FOUND AN ECHO IN THE EDITORIALS OF SUCH PAPERS AS THE PRO-CONGRESS "NATIONAL HERALD" AND THE MOSCOW-LINING "PATRIOT". IN OUR ESTIMATION, HOWEVER, THIS CRITICISM, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHARGE THAT DESAI IN FORESWEARING FURTHER PNE'S IS KNUCKLING UNDER TO US PRESSURE, HAS NOT STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD. WE SEE LITTLE TO SUGGEST THAT IN DEVELOPING THEIR CHARGES, THE OPPOSITION HAS SUCCEEDED IN MAKING THE PNE QUESTION ANYTHING APPROACHING A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL ISSUE.

14. SHOULD MORARJI MOVE BEHIND HIS PRESENT APPROACH TO THE WEAPONS AND PNE ISSUES AND ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS (LET ALONE PUBLICLY FORESWEARING REPROCESSING AND A FUTURE BREEDER PROGRAM), THIS RULING PARTY COMPLAISANCE AND OPPOSITION INEFFECTIVENESS ON NUCLEAR POLICY COULD CHANGE. SUCH A MOVE SHOULD

BE WIDELY REGARDED AS A REVERSAL OF THE POSITION

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10568 03 OF 03 261441Z
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-14 SSO-00 INR-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 NEW DELHI 10568

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DESAI HAD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED, AND IS LIKELY TO SPARK SHARP
OPPOSITION AMONG THE MORE NATIONALISTIC FORCES WITHIN THE JANATA
AS WELL AS OUTSIDE THE RULING PARTY. THE OPPOSITION WOULD FIND
IN SUCH A MOVE A READY-MADE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT,
AND CONGRESS LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT HAVE ALREADY SERVED NOTICE
THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO DO SO. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO FORE-
CAST THE NATIONALIST LINE THEY WOULD TAKE IN MAKING THIS CHALLENGE.
SIMILAR THEMES ARE LIKELY TO BE STRUCK BY MANY SECTIONS OF THE
PRESS, WHICH HAVE ALREADY VOICED OPINIONS ON THIS. IT IS
REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT THE PM AND HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES ARE
AWARE OF THESE LIKELY REPERCUSSIONS.

15. PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PLANS. WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION OF
ANY CHANGE SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE IN THE GOI'S
PROFESSED LACK OF CONCERN TOWARD PAKISTAN'S ACQUISITION OF A
REPROCESSING PLANT AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS COULD LEAD
TO THE PAKS DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES CAPABILITY. THE
BRIEF EXCITEMENT SPARKED BY THE SAMACHAR STORY OUT OF PARIS
REPORTING THAT THE PM HAD TAKEN UP THE REPROCESSING ISSUE WITH
GISCARD WAS SQUELCHED BY DESAI HIMSELF. THE INDIANS' SEEMING
LACK OF CONCERN HAS BEEN EVIDENCED IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS
WITH US ABOUT THE MOMENTOUS DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE RECENTLY
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 10568 03 OF 03 261441Z

TAKENPLACE ACROSS THE BORDER. TO OUR RECOLLECTION, THEY HAVE NOT ASKED US WHAT THESE MIGHT MEAN FOR PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PLANS (THOUGH FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA, LEARNING THAT NYE WILL BE IN PAKISTAN, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY THAT HE WILL BE INTERESTED IN HIS FINDINGS THERE.)

16. THE LINE WE GET AT MEA CONTINUES TO BE THAT INDIA IS MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DANGERS OF A BUILD-UP IN PAKISTAN'S CONVENTIONAL ARMS THAN ABOUT ITS GOING THE NUCLEAR ROUTE. THIS PROFFESSED ATTITUDE HAS APPARENTLY NOT BEEN CHANGED BY THE DOWNFALL OF BHUTTO, WHICH RAISES THE SPECTER OF NEW PAK LEADERS LESS RELIABLE THAN THE INDIANS HAD CONSIDERED THE FORMER PM GETTING POSSESSION OF A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. IT HAS ALSO APPARENTLY BEEN UNALTERED BY THE US DECISION ON THE A-7, WHICH SEEMINGLY MAKES IT LESS URGENT FOR THE INDIANS TO STRESS TO US THEIR PRIMARY CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS CONCERN IN THE EXPECTATION THAT WE ARE LOOKING TO A CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRADE-OFF TO HEAD OFF THE PAK NUCLEAR OPTION.

17. HOW GENUINE IS THIS APPARENT LACK OF INDIAN CONCERN IS ANOTHER MATTER. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOI VIEWS THE ISSUE WITH THE EQUANIMITY IT PROFESSES, THOUGH ITS OWN PNE AND ITS CALL FOR NUCLEAR INDEPENDENCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR IT TO SPEAK OUT, OR TO SPEAK PRIVATELY TO US. FOR THE DESAI GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS STRONG OPPOSITION TO A FURTHER INDIAN EXPLOSION, THE PROSPECT OF A PAK BLAST HAS AN ADDITIONAL DIMENSION. IT MUST SURELY OCCUR TO THE NEW GOVT THAT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION IN PAKISTAN COULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT ON THE INDIAN PUBLIC'S PRESENT ACQUIESCENCE IN DESAI'S NUCLEAR POLICIES.

18. WE ARE REPEATING TO ACTION AND INFO ADDRESSEES CONSUL GENERAL COURTNEY'S RESPONSE TO REFTEL (BOMBAY 1772, JUST CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 10568 03 OF 03 261441Z

RECEIVED HERE) AND GENERALLY CONCUR WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS HE HAS MADE IN PARAS 4, 5, AND 6.
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Message Attributes

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